

CRC Notes
Sunday, November 18

In attendance: Monica Luedke, Kristin Thorsness, Jean Harris, Laura Baumgartner

We began with a discussion of how to work on our plan of monthly events at Aldersgate to continue the conversation for congregation members about what it means to become fully inclusive and possible membership in the RMN.

1. December event, co-sponsored with Outreach Team (No Room at the Inn)

Host a speaker on December 16 or January 6 to talk about new YMCA project. Jean will organize speaker. Kristin will have thank you card and gift ready. Kristin will also check into a possible service project on Mission Sunday with one of the organizations that her mother recommended. Laura will make sure that it works with the rest of the calendar.

An alternative is that Friends of Youth is collecting 14 items for youth on the streets and we could make that list available as a service project if the speaker happens in January rather than December. If the speaker is in December, we can do the collection in January.

2. Mission Sunday (3/24) idea

Possibly host brunch for homeless youth who are part of the LGBTQ community, assemble kits, or other project.

3. Kristin asked if we can invite the Hearts for Others group from Fairwood UMC. We thought also maybe invite Bellevue FUMC to future events.

4. Debrief October and November events

There was good feedback on the three models presented at the October event. People thought the event was clear and appreciated the information.

We also discussed frustration with the progress toward General Conference.

The panel discussion seemed like it went well.

Attendance was less than hoped for.

The point was made clearly that being part of RMN is a more clear and more emphatic statement than Lyrics from this morning, "confused about gender" can fly in a church that thinks of itself as inclusive, but would never fly in a Reconciling church because those words are weapons used to tell trans people that they are only confused. While the intent was good, the impact was harmful and offensive.

5. We want to have a check-in with the congregation to see what they are thinking about becoming Reconciling. We are hearing some comments about the process we are in getting stale. This could go along with a Table Talk event in January if that fits in worship. We need to check with Brad about this, both in terms of scheduling it and in terms of making up the questions but we want them more specific about RMN.

In January, we want people to respond to these questions:

- Do you have enough information about Reconciling Ministries Network?
- What other information do you need?
- Are you ready to vote about whether Aldersgate should join the RMN?
- If you are not prepared to vote yet, what would be helpful to you as we continue in our congregational discernment?

6. Looking ahead, we propose a movie showing of Boy Erased or Love, Simon or Transfigurations as an event in the new year? Could we show multiple of them with a break between?

7. Possible Table Talks after General Conference? We definitely will need to have another informational event about what decisions were made by the denomination.

8. Possible object lesson for an event or month-long series, possibly sermon topic:

Could possibly create a jar using global averages, talk about it, then ask people to create one for our community, then ask about whether to exclude. We want to make sure that we aren't making people "out" their family members. In more detail, use a glass vase and ask participants to put colored marbles into the vase. If you are in the LGBTQ community, place one color marble in. If you have a gay family member, place another color marble in. If you have a trans family member, place another color in. Possibly leave the jars and marbles near the bathroom so it's not a public action. Then, ask the question about whether we want to exclude the people who are represented by those marbles. If we vote not to become reconciling, we are voting to exclude, even if our vote is to be inclusive but not reconciling.

9. Laura has heard requests for an event to have a speaker come in and do education around gender pronouns. She wonders about inviting Terri Stewart to come and provide that training. It's hard and uncomfortable to learn new habits. This would be an inclusion event, not really related to becoming reconciling. Perhaps this is a follow-up event to a decision to become reconciling (or not), or maybe people ask for it and we should do it earlier. It feels like a very specific request, which may not be directly related to becoming ready to vote. There is concern about whether people in the congregation will assume that the decision to become reconciling has already been made if we start talking about pronouns. Possibly we could incorporate some discussion like at Table Talks to practice changing habits of speech. There is concern about perception that a discussion of pronouns would only be appropriate in a church that's already decided to be reconciling.

Planned Monthly Events

December - speaker

January- Table Talks, survey, collection

February- movie night? and/or info event on GC?

March- Mission Sunday project and/or info (debrief) event on GC (want to do this early in March, potentially before Lent begins)

We will meet again at noon on 1/13. Brad and Joe and Laura will talk and figure out a plan for Table Talks in January and communicate by email if we need help. If we decide that another in person meeting is needed, we will look at the week of 12/16.